GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3189
ANSWERED ON:16.03.2016
Fishermen Issue
Adsul Shri Anandrao ;Arunmozhithevan Shri A.;Jardosh Smt. Darshana Vikram;Kamal Nath Shri ;Patil Shri Shivaji Adhalrao;Raut Shri Vinayak Bhaurao;Shinde Dr. Shrikant Eknath;Shrirang Shri Chandu Barne;Yadav Shri Dharmendra

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether some Indian fishermen have been arrested by Pakistan recently and if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether any negotiation has been held by the Union Government with Pakistan in this regard and if so, the outcome thereof;

(c) whether the Ministry has also suggested the Department of Space to develop a technology that can inform the fishermen about the ocean boundaries of the country and if so, the details thereof and the response received thereon;

(d) the steps taken by the Government to get back Indian fishermen and their boats from Pakistan custody; and

(e) the efforts made by the Government to get the release of all the fishermen/civilians/soldiers, etc. who have completed their jail term from Pakistan''s custody at the earliest?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
[GEN. (DR) V. K. SINGH (RETD)]

(a) As per information available, 175 Indian fishermen have been apprehended by Pakistani authorities this year (2016) so far.
(b), (d) & (e) Government regularly takes up with the Pakistan authorities the issue of early release and repatriation of apprehended Indian prisoners and fishermen as well as getting regular consular access to them and ensuring their welfare. Government also, on a continuing basis, monitors the status of all such Indian prisoners and fishermen in Pakistani jails.

The matter of early release of fishermen in each other's custody and their boats was discussed during Prime Minister's meeting with Pakistan Prime Minister at Ufa (Russia), on 10 July 2015. Pakistan subsequently released 163 fishermen and 2 civil prisoners in 2015 and 86 fishermen and 1 civil prisoner on 8 March 2016. Earlier, following a 9-member delegation visit to Pakistan in July 2014, fifty-seven Indian Fishing Boats (IFBs) were released by Pakistan on 23 March 2015. Further, a 4-member delegation visited Pakistan in March 2016 for release of another 22 IFBs.

In so far as soldiers are concerned, according to available information, 74 Missing Defence Personnel including 54 Prisoners of War are believed to be in Pakistani jails since 1971. Government has repeatedly taken up with Government of Pakistan through diplomatic channels and during high-level contacts the matter of their release. However, Pakistan does not acknowledge the presence of any Indian Prisoner of War in its custody. During the visit of External Affairs Minister to Pakistan in January 2007, Pakistan government was persuaded to receive a delegation of relatives of Missing Defence Personnel to permit them to visit prisons in Pakistan, where they are believed to be incarcerated. A delegation of relatives, accordingly, visited 10 jails in Pakistan from June 1-14, 2007. The delegation could not conclusively confirm the physical presence of the Indian Prisoners of War.

The matter of Missing Defence Personnel and Prisoners of War was raised with Pakistan, including at the last rounds of India-Pakistan Home/Interior Secretary talks held in Islamabad on May 24-25, 2012 and India-Pakistan Foreign Secretary level talks in New Delhi on July 4-5, 2012.

(c) No, there is no such proposal with this Ministry nor with the Department of Space.